AAC

What to ask for in the IEP

Six questions to ask when your child uses a communication device, a picture board, or an app at school

A device listed as a support is not the same as AAC written in as a service. If the plan doesn't name who runs it and how often, it quietly stops being used.

Ask these six questions

- [ ] **Is AAC written in as a service, with minutes?** A support is a line in a document. A service has time, a provider, and a place in the schedule.
- [ ] **Who is responsible for programming it?** Vocabulary has to grow with your child. Ask who adds to it, how often, and whether they are trained.
- [ ] **How many minutes a week, and with whom?** Push for a number. "As needed" is the phrase that lets a service disappear without anyone deciding to cancel it.

> **BEFORE THE MEETING**
> Pick the two questions that matter most for your child right now, and write them down. Six questions in one meeting is a lot, and two asked clearly is worth more than six asked quickly.

The other three

- [ ] **What training has the team had?** The teacher, the para, and related service providers all need to model language on it. Ask when that training happened.
- [ ] **How will they show it is being used?** Ask for data: frequency, settings, and who collected it. If nobody collects it, nobody can say whether it works.
- [ ] **What happens when it breaks?** Ask who sends it out, what your child uses in the meantime, and how long a repair usually takes.

Red flags

- The device stays in the speech room or the backpack
- Your child has to earn the device, or loses it as a consequence
- Someone says your child is not ready yet, or has to show certain skills first. That rule is not in the law
- Goals only measure device operation, like touching an icon when prompted
- Staff never model on the device themselves
- Vocabulary has not been updated in months

> **WORTH SAYING OUT LOUD**
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> **AAC is your child's voice.** Taking it away for the afternoon is not a discipline strategy, it is asking a child to be quiet all day.

If the device is not being used

Ask for the data first. Frequency of use, the settings it is used in, and who is collecting it. A plan that cannot produce that data is a plan nobody is running, and that is a reason to call a meeting.

You can request an IEP meeting at any time. It does not have to wait for the annual review.

Getting ready for an AAC meeting and want a second set of eyes?

Book a free 15-minute consultation at MyAccessAdvocacy.com

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